

REGION 9 — HUDSON-DELAWARE

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The winter of 1993-94 will long be remembered as one as the most brutal in many years. Extreme cold and heavy precipitation in the form of snow, rain and ice crippled the Region from late December through the end of the period. The lowest temperature reported in the Region was -29°F from Millbrook, northern DUTC on 21 Jan.

The birds did not have it any better. Many strange occurrences were reported, some of which could be perceived as acts of desperation. An American Kestrel and a Red-shouldered Hawk were seen raiding a suet feeders and gulping down hunks of fat at different feeding locations. At some feeders, there were so many accipiters that the invited species didn't have a chance! An Ovenbird was seen at another feeder scratching about in hopes of finding something to eat in mid December. Record numbers of reports were received of birds being found in all parts of houses, from the attic to basement. Many birds not prepared for the severe weather conditions were found dead. Of note in this category were Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks and Barn Owl. Half-hardy species such as Northern Mockingbird, Gray Catbird, Carolina Wren

and Yellow-rumped Warbler numbers plummeted as compared to other winters.

There was a bright side to this past winter. It came in yellow, red and pink. Finally! Winter Finches! Yes, the long awaited winter finch movement finally happened. The Region's birders were treated to excellent numbers of Common Redpoll, which was the most abundant of the winter finch species reported. Flocks were reported as high as 300 were reported. Other species discussed in this report are Pine Grosbeak, White-winged Crossbill, Hoary Redpoll, Pine Siskin and Evening Grosbeak. In contrast, this winter's Bohemian Waxwing invasion never made it to Region 9. Purple Finch was noticeably absent from the southern part of the Region, and generally restricted to feeders in the northern section.

With all the water up north frozen this winter (not to mention down here), Bald Eagle was reported in record numbers throughout the Region. Any deer carcass found on a reservoir was guaranteed to be surrounded by Bald Eagle within a day. A total of 86 Bald Eagle was tallied on the one day DEC count along with a lone Golden Eagle. Perhaps another 30 to 40 birds patrolled the Hudson River in Region 9, which is a conservative estimate from the data received. Add to that the minimum 17 found feeding on a deer carcass on a northern Westchester Reservoir in mid January. Then add the voluminous reports from other reservoirs, lakes and rivers, the total count would appear to be about 225.

A massive grebe fallout consisting primarily of Horned and Red-necked Grebes was reported from upstate Regions in mid February, when they were picked up dead and dying on roads and in parking lots. Only one such incident was reported in Region 9. Four to five Red-necked Grebe were found on a roadway in western Sull on 11 Feb. All except one were found dead, with clumps of ice on their feet. The live bird was saved and released into open water, where it recuperated for several days.

Despite the harsh weather and hazardous roads conditions, the list of rarities is rather impressive. A *Western Grebe* was reported by two observers at the Edith G. Read Sanctuary in Rye on 3 Dec. Unfortunately, it could not be relocated the following day despite intensive searching. A lone Northern Gannet (TWB) was seen on Long Island Sound off Rye on 4 Dec (TWB). The previously reported Tufted Duck (TWB) retreated from Playland Lake to the waters of Long Island Sound in Rye when the lake

completely froze over on 9 Jan (TWB). A female Barrow's Goldeneye (TWB) put in a brief appearance at the Edith G. Read Sanctuary on 14 Feb (TWB). Four Lesser Black-backed Gull (TWB, JPA, AG, S&BL, FB, EDT) were reported from the Region. A number of *Black Vulture* were seen in the Region this winter. A *Boreal Chickadee* (Hunter Pollack, SG, mob) spent almost the entire winter from 22 Dec at a feeder in Patterson, PUTN, to the delight of hundreds of visiting birders. A Dickcissel visited a Rye feeder from 1-13 Jan (TWB). A *Hoary Redpoll* was reported from a PUTN Feeder in February. Fortunately, the feeder watcher was a birder and immediately noticed the difference between it and Common Redpoll and took notes (SBI, NYSARC). In addition to those rarities are the following unexpected species were reported: Blue-winged Teal, Eurasian Wigeon, Common Moorhen, Spotted Sandpiper, Sora, Barn Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Lapland Longspur, House Wren, Common Yellowthroat, Ovenbird, Northern Oriole, Chipping Sparrow and Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

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Abbreviations: BDA - Black Dirt region, w ORAN; BWCBC - s WEST portion of Bronx-Westchester CBC, 26 Dec; EGR - Edith G. Read Sanctuary; EOCBC - Eastern Orange County CBC, 18 Dec; LMACBC - Lake Mohonk-Ashokan Res CBC ULST, 18 Dec; MC - Marshlands Conservancy, Rye; PCBC - Putnam County CBC, 1 Jan; PLL - Playland Lake, Rye; PP - Piermont Pier, Rock; RCBC - Rockland County CBC, 19 Dec.

Winter reports: **Com. Loon:** one-three Rye all winter. **Red-throated Loon:** one-four Rye all winter. **Pied-billed Grebe:** singles on WEST coast in Dec; nine PCBC. **Horned Grebe:** 27 EGR 6 Feb. **Red-necked Grebe:** two EGR all winter. **W. Grebe:** intro (EDT, JS, no details). **N. Gannet:** intro. **Great Cormorant:** 20 Hudson R WEST 15 Jan; up to eight Kensico Res WEST all winter. **Double-crested Cormorant:** three BWCBC; two EOCBC. **Great Blue Heron:** 36 EGR 26 Dec. **Black-crowned Night-**

Heron: one DUTC 18 Dec. **Snow Goose:** 3000 Wallkill ORAN 14-16 Dec. **Brant:** 25 on Hudson R. late Jan (THM), rare inland in winter. **Green-winged Teal:** 30 Woodlands L WEST through mid Dec (LS); 34 BWCBC. **Blue-winged Teal:** EOCBC. **N. Shoveler:** 16 BWCBC; 50 RCBC. **Eurasian Wigeon:** Rock L SP 2 Dec (EDT, JS). **Redhead:** 19 EGR 9 Jan. **Tufted Duck:** *intro*. **Greater Scaup:** 6000 PLL and EGR all season. 20,000 counted by DEC in Long Island Sound mid Jan. **Lesser Scaup:** 350+ PLL in Dec. **Surf Scoter:** one EGR 29 Jan (AG). **Barrow's Goldeneye:** *intro*. **Ruddy Duck:** 700 total s WEST late Dec.

Black Vulture: one LMACBC; one Haverstraw area Rock throughout the season, four there 29 Jan (EDT); one Mt Peter ORAN 6 Feb (EDT); one in a roost with about 60 Turkey Vulture in Chappaqua late Feb (Anne Swaim). **Bald Eagle:** *intro*. **N. Harrier:** five at roost BDA. **Rough-legged Hawk:** less numerous this winter, max five BDA, three PP 16 Jan; singles widespread. **Golden Eagle:** two Pine Plains DUTC all winter; three N Sull all winter (JW). **Am. Kestrel:** 18 EOCBC. **Merlin:** one s WEST 15 Jan (TWB); two Rock all winter (FB, CW). **Virginia Rail:** three MC 26 Dec. **Sora:** one BWCBC. **Com. Moorhen:** one feeding on cracked corn at pond edge ULST late Dec-early Jan (*fide* EDT). **Spotted Sandpiper:** PLL 5-17 Dec. **Ruddy Turnstone:** 43 EGR 18 Feb. **Purple Sandpiper:** 40 EGR 4 Dec. **Dunlin:** 55 EGR 3 Dec. **Com. Snipe:** one DUTC 18 Dec. **Bonaparte's Gull:** 53 BWCBC. **Iceland Gull:** two imm L. Gleneida PUTN (S&BL), unusual; one Highland ULST early Jan (*fide* JPA). **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** two Rye; one Kensico Res WEST; one Haverstraw Bay Rock; one Croton Bay on The Hudson 18 Dec, probably the Rock bird.

Barn Owl: one found dead Rye 27 Jan (TWB). **Barred Owl:** one Scarsdale BWCBC (John Moyle). **Long-eared Owl:** one MC through end of Jan; two DUTC 18 Feb, one n DUTC 5 Dec, one s ORAN 11 Jan. **Short-eared Owl:** one EGR 6 Jan; one PP 12-13 Feb. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** one LMACBC. **Red-headed Woodpecker:** one at feeder Sull daily.

E. Phoebe: one DUTC 18 Dec, one WEST 26 Dec. **Am. Crow:** Rock roost disbanded; White Plains roost of 2000 not previously reported here. **Com. Raven:** four PCBC, first count record. **Boreal Chickadee:** *intro*. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** numbers down sharply. **Carolina Wren:** population less than half of last winter's. **Marsh Wren:** one n DUTC 31 Dec. **House Wren:** one found dead in an ULST house late Feb. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** numbers down. **N. Mockingbird:** numbers down. **Am. Pipit:** one PCBC, one WEST 5 Jan. **Cedar Waxwing:** 600 in one flock, n WEST late Jan.

Com. Yellowthroat: one Rye BWCBC. **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** numbers way down. **Ovenbird:** one Rock feeder 29-30 Dec (Judy Pollack). **Dickcissel:** *intro*. **Chipping Sparrow:** one Rye 23 Dec (LB, JPA). **Sharp-tailed Sparrow:** one Rye BWCBC. **White-crowned Sparrow:** two BDA 14 Jan (EDT). **Lapland Longspur:** one BDA 14 Jan (EDT); one Rye 22 Jan (TWB). **Snow Bunting:** 50 n WEST 16 Jan (THM), uncommon. **Rusty Blackbird:** one PCBC. **N. Oriole:** Baltimore type EOCBC. **Pine Grosbeak:** 18 s ULST 10-25 Dec. **White-winged Crossbill:** one at feeder PUTN Jan (mob). **Hoary Redpoll:** *intro*. **Pine Siskin:** max 16 MC feeder, almost completely absent elsewhere. **Am. Goldfinch:** good numbers at feeders. **Evening Grosbeak:** scattered small flocks throughout n section of Region.

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